



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Alabama**

# **What's the Cost? A Blue Cross Perspective**

**Anne M. Schmidt, MD**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

March 10, 2017

# “The Opioid Epidemic”



# Chronic Opioid Use

## “Chronic Use”

Non-cancer patients who fill **4 or more** opioid prescriptions in a year

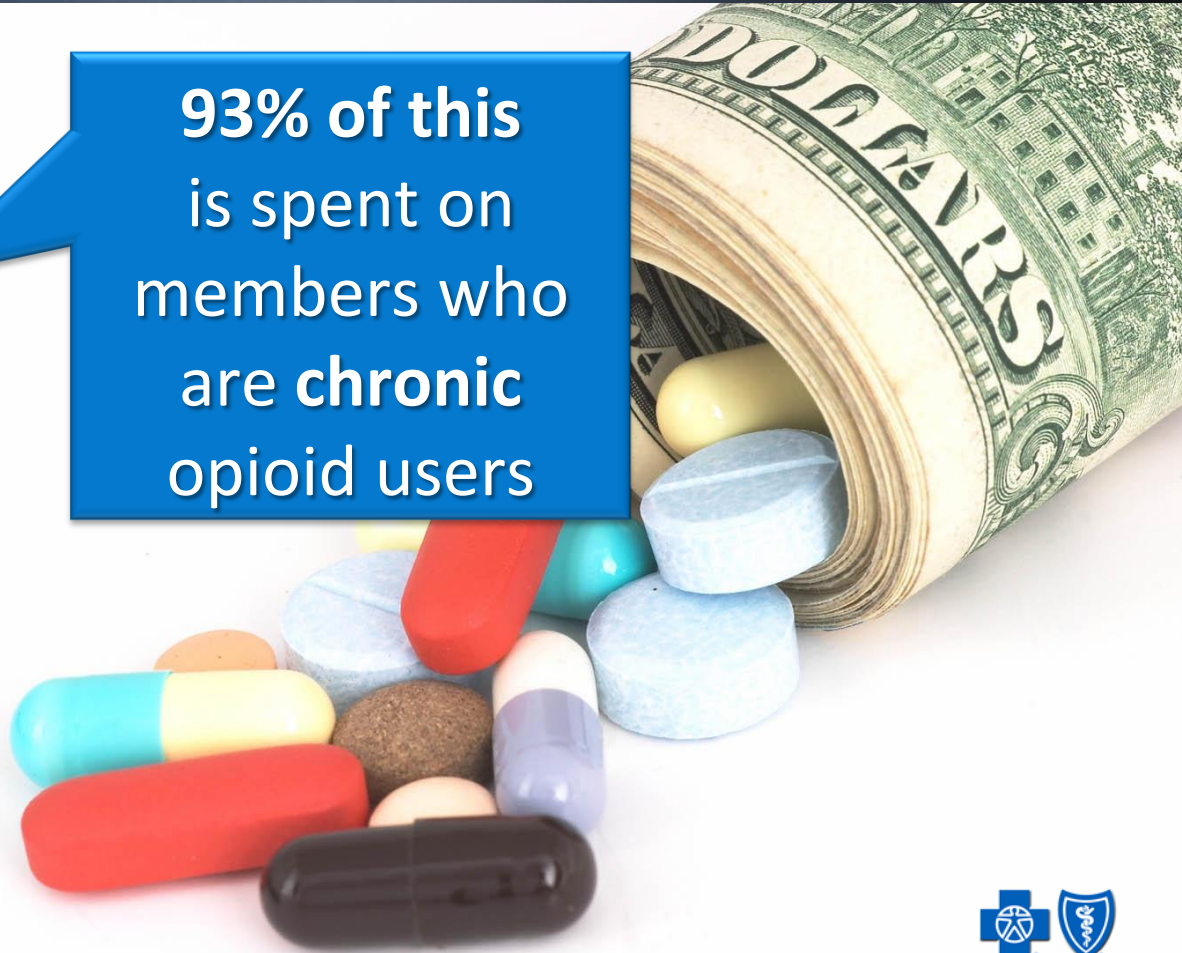


**58,414 Blue Cross Members**  
met this criteria

# Medication Cost

We spend  
**\$36.2 M**  
on opioid  
medication per  
year.

93% of this  
is spent on  
members who  
are **chronic**  
opioid users



# Chronic Opioid Use

26% of all members who fill an opioid prescription are **CHRONIC** users. (1 in 4)

For every 4 prescriptions written for opioids...



...1 goes to a **chronic** user.



# Associated Costs

**The economic impact is much more than just the cost of the medication**

- ❖ Emergency Department Visits
- ❖ Inpatient Admissions





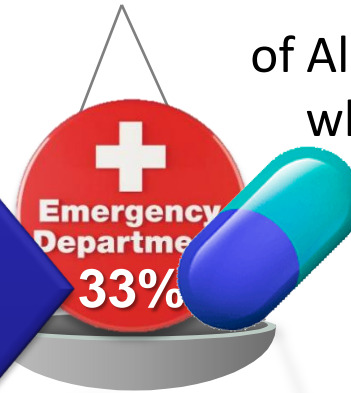
# Emergency Department

ER visits for members of our  
in-state underwritten population

Per year,  
**12%**  
of Alabama  
members who  
do not use chronic  
opioids visit the ED



**3 X**  
the Rate!

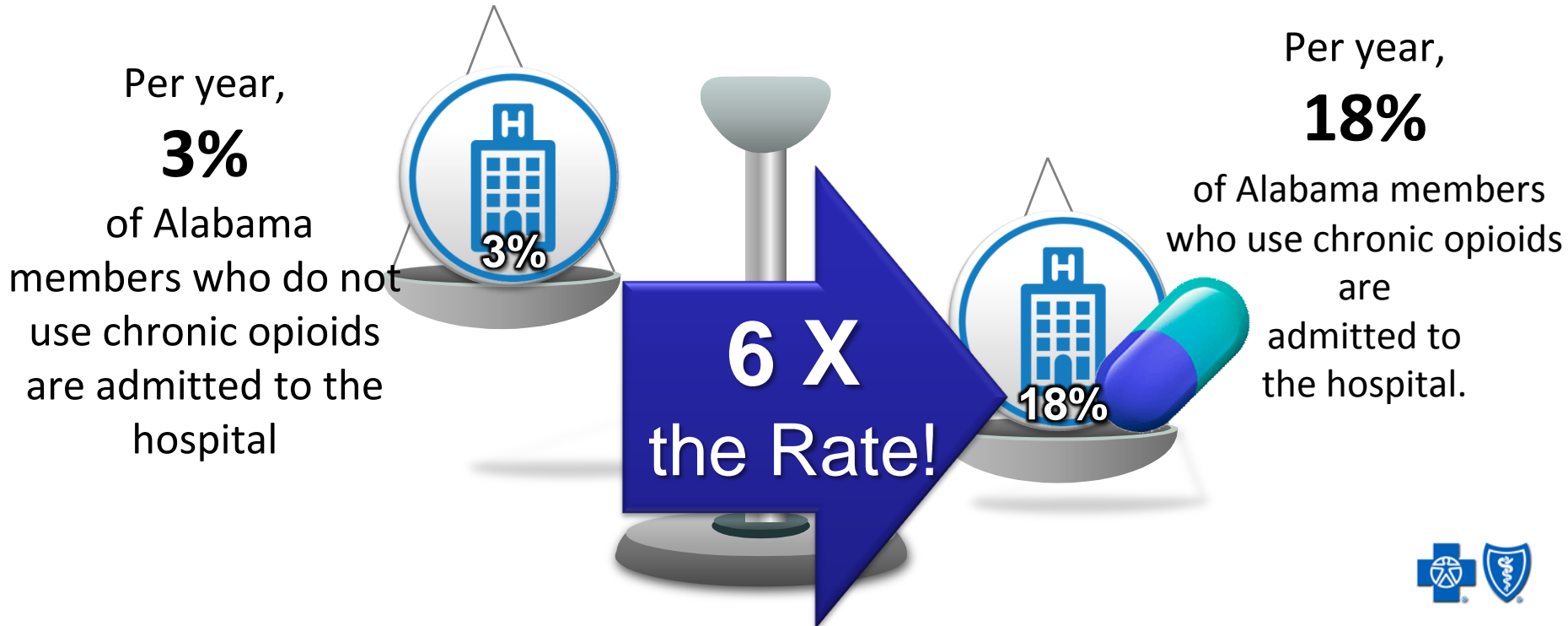


Per year,  
**33%**  
of Alabama members  
who use chronic  
opioids  
visit the ED



# Inpatient Admissions

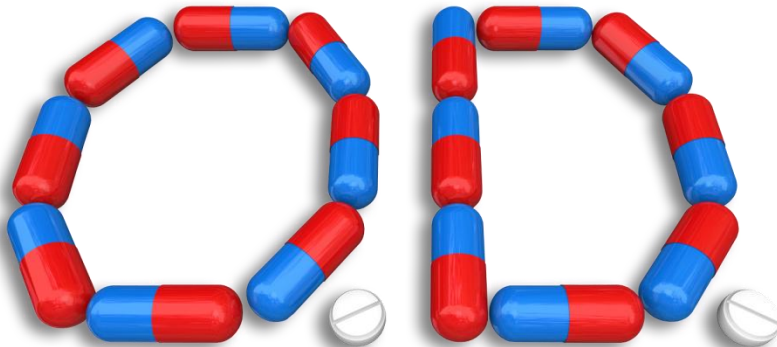
Rate of inpatient admissions for our in-state underwritten population





# Risk

**40%** of our members who take  
chronic opioids  
are also prescribed chronic benzodiazepines



**1/3 of opioid overdose  
deaths** in the U.S. involve  
this drug combination



# Total Cost

**\$33.8 Million**

The annual cost of opioid medication for members who use them chronically



**TOTAL COST = ?**

# Our “Prescription” for The Problem



- ❖ Supporting treatment for SUD, including Medication Assisted Treatment
  - ✓ **\$22.6M** for inpatient and outpatient SUD treatment
  - ✓ **\$14M** for buprenorphine prescriptions
  - ✓ **\$532,800** for Vivitrol prescriptions

# Our “Prescription” for The Problem



- ❖ Eliminating the methadone MAT exclusion
- ❖ Supporting CDC guidelines
- ❖ Provider education
- ❖ Partnerships with behavioral health and pharmacy
- ❖ BCBSA initiatives



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